

Sampson County Natural Area Inventory

SOUTH GARLAND SANDHILL Significant Natural Heritage Area

Site significance: County
Quadrangle: Garland

Size: 30 acres
Ownership: private

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES: South Garland Sandhill natural area contains a small but mature example of the Xeric Sandhill Scrub Coastal Plain Variant natural community, with canopy trees to 70 feet in height and 1.5 feet in diameter. The site also supports a Pond Pine Woodland pocosin community, and two Watch List plants, naked golden-aster (*Chrysopsis trichophylla*) and Lewis's heartleaf (*Hexastylis lewisii*).

LANDSCAPE RELATIONSHIPS: This natural area is located in southwestern Sampson County south of Garland. It lies within the northwestern arm of Black River Floodplain Macrosite, which extends along South River from near Autryville to the confluence with Black River near Ivanhoe. South Garland Sandhill is located along the southwest edge of an upland interstream terrace, and includes slopes that descend to the South River floodplain, where South River Swamp Forest natural area lies 0.4 mile to the southwest. The site is connected by the river floodplain to other natural areas in the megasite, including South River Aquatic Habitat embedded within the South River Swamp Forest site. These landscape connections benefit the movement of several groups of animals.

SITE DESCRIPTION: South Garland Sandhill is located on the slope and summit of an interstream terrace above the South River floodplain. The summit and slope support a small, mature example of the Xeric Sandhill Scrub Coastal Plain Variant natural community. A Pond Pine Woodland pocosin community is located at the base of the slope, forming an ecotone with the outer edge of the South River floodplain. Xeric Sandhill Scrub covers most of the site, and is characterized by an open to moderate canopy codominated by longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) and loblolly pine (*P. taeda*). Canopy trees are mature, averaging 12-14 inches in diameter, and reaching 18 inches. Turkey oak (*Quercus laevis*) forms a dense to moderately dense understory, while dwarf huckleberry (*Gaylussacia dumosa*), Carolina wiregrass (*Aristida stricta*), and bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum* var. *pseudocaudatum*) form patches in the sparse to patchy shrub and ground layers.

The Pond Pine Woodland pocosin community has a moderately dense canopy of pond pine (*Pinus serotina*) over an open subcanopy. The dense shrub layer is dominated by titi (*Cyrilla racemiflora*) and fetterbush (*Lyonia lucida*). The ecotone between Pond Pine Woodland and Xeric Sandhill Scrub on the low slope has floral components of the Wet Pine Flatwoods community. There is a streamhead on the site whose pocosin community has been altered by timber management and stream channelization.